BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Giving

- **In 1997, approximately 2.2 million British Columbians—73% of the population (aged 15 and over) contributed $552 million to charitable and non-profit organizations**. On average, financial donations amounted to $241 per person within a twelve month period.

  Seventy-eight percent of BC households with income greater than $80,000 made contributions, averaging $449, this represents 0.5% of pre-tax household income. Households earning less than $20,000 gave proportionately more (0.7%) of their household income, with an average donation of $146. Women (76%) were only slightly more likely to be donors than men (71%). Charitable donations by age group showed the 55 to 64 year olds (85%) were most likely to contribute, followed by 35 to 44 year olds (83%) and 45 to 54 year olds (79%).

  One in three Canadians made contributions to religious organizations, and these accounted for half (51%) of the total value of all donations. On average, annual contributions given to religious organizations were $270 compared to $125 to non-religious organizations.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Volunteering

- **One in three British Columbians volunteer their time, energy and abilities for charitable and community organizations**. This amounts to 169 million hours, the equivalent of 88,251 full-time year-round jobs (40 hours per week for 48 weeks). Some segments of the population are more likely to volunteer their time. The volunteer rate was relatively constant among age groups—35 to 44 year olds (37%), and 25 to 34 and 45 to 54 year olds was (36%), were followed by 15 to 24 year olds (28%). As expected, those individuals working part-time had more time to donate—46%, compared to full-time workers (33%). There is evidence that the higher the education level, the greater the propensity for a person to participate in volunteer activities. Volunteers with a university education had a higher participation rate (48%) than those with less than high school education (23%).

  Among the unemployed volunteers, over half believed their volunteer efforts would increase their chances of finding employment or gaining new skills. For unemployed, young volunteers this was particularly so—46% stated they had acquired new skills and 28% thought their volunteering had increased their chances of success in paid work or business ventures. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Culture

- **The eighty-eight cinema theatres in British Columbia had revenues of $72.8 million dollars in 1996-97**. Over the past five years, admission receipts generated a 26% increase in theatre revenues. Concession revenue totaled $28.7 million, up 28% from 1992-93. Profit margins have remained fairly stable at 13% of total revenues for BC theatres. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Tuition Fees

- **Undergraduate arts students in BC had the smallest increase in tuition fees**. Tuition fees edged up 0.7% to $2,736 in 1998/99. Only the private institutes in BC, were respon-

Report **Plastics outpace the pack**

Did you know...?
Three-quarters of Canada's mammal species are found in British Columbia, and 24 of those species are exclusive to our province

sible for the small increase in tuition fees. Ontario showed the largest increase at 11.3% to $3,536 followed by Alberta (7.9% to $3,447).

Foreign students traditionally pay more for university tuition fees than Canadian students. The average foreign arts undergraduate pays $8,458 in tuition fees, a 3.9% increase from the previous year. Graduate students on average will pay $7,386, an increase of 0.4%.

Source: Statistics Canada

Family Income

- **The median family income in British Columbia for 1996 was $46,100**. Provincially, the Yukon had the highest family income at $52,900, followed by Ontario ($48,700). The province with the lowest median income was Newfoundland with $34,200. Half of incomes are above and half are below median income.

  Of the 1,052,350 families to file a tax return in 1996, husband-wife families represented 86%. The median income for husband-wife families was $50,900 relative to that of lone-parent families—$21,800. Non-family persons reported a median income of $18,000.

  Ninety-eight percent of lone-parent families across Canada reported income from government transfer payments. On average they received $7,800, the largest proportion (42%) being composed social assistance payments.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Earnings

- **University graduates earned twice as much as people with less than eight years of education.** In 1997, those with a graduate degree earned almost $25 dollars an hour compared to $12 for those with less than eight years of education. Experienced workers (older workers) are more likely to earn higher wages than younger, inexperienced workers. The average wage of workers aged 55 and over was $17, relative to youths (aged 15 to 24) at $9 per hour.

  Unionized workers were more likely to have higher earning than non-unionized workers. The union workers, on their own, tend to have characteristics leading to greater earnings. The profile of unionized workers are: higher than average education, a disproportionate number of male employees, more public sector workers, older workers, professionals, and people employed in large firms.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Minimum Wage

- **During the first quarter of this year, 70,100 British Columbians, or 5.0% of all employees, were earning no more than the minimum wage**. Nationally, there were 544,900 people (4.8% of employees) working for pay which was less than or equal to minimum wage in the first quarter of 1998. Among the provinces, Alberta (2.6%) and Manitoba (2.7%) had the smallest percentages of minimum wage workers, while Newfoundland (9.1%) had the largest.

- **British Columbia's minimum wage was increased from $7.00 to $7.15 per hour in April**. The province has the highest minimum wage in the country, while Alberta ($5.00) has the lowest. Minimum wages in other provinces range from $5.25 in Newfoundland to $6.85 in Ontario. Most provinces have a minimum wage between $5 and $6 dollars an hour.

  Source: Statistics Canada

Housing Starts

- **Urban housing starts in BC are down 35% from the previous June**. For the majority of urban areas with a population of 10,000—housing starts were in decline. Only a couple of bright spots had increased residential building activity in the province. These were Fort St. John (264%), Kamloops (167%) and Penticton (45%). In Victoria, there was no change from the previous June.

  Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

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Infoline Report: Plastic manufactured products become important new element in provincial export mix

Contact: George Dufour (250) 387-0376

Originally published in May 1998 issue of *Exports*. Annual subscription is $60 + GST

Plastic products have emerged as one of the important new exports through which British Columbia is steadily reducing its reliance on natural resource commodities.

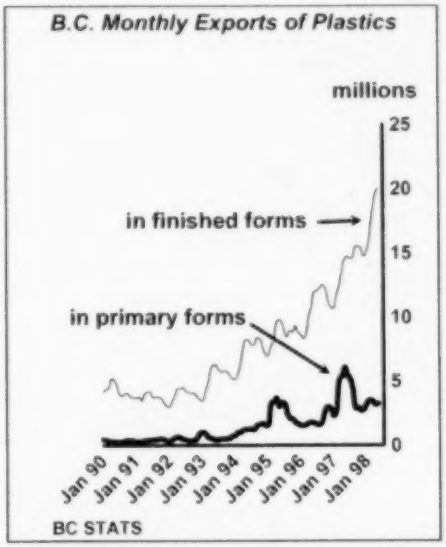
British Columbia exports of plastic manufactured goods grew at an annual average rate of 20 per cent between 1990 and 1997, more than twice as fast as the 8 per cent rate for all British Columbia exports. Exports of these goods also exceeded the 18 per cent average annual growth rate for exports of plastic manufactured products from Canada as a whole.

Plastics manufacturers in British Columbia are mainly located in the lower mainland. Figures provided by the Canadian Plastics Industry Association listed 237 plants in the province as of December 1997, including 70 molders, 36 extruders and 31 fabricators. Only two other provinces were reported as having more plastic industry production plants, Ontario with 2,363 and Quebec with 826. There were 185 reported for Alberta.

With relatively little production of raw materials for plastic, the industry in British Columbia is primarily focused on fabrication of manufactured goods. Provincial plastics exports included 78 per cent manufactured products in 1997, and only 22 per cent primary commodities. By contrast, the plastic exports of oil and gas rich Alberta included 14 per cent manufactured products and 86 per cent primary commodities. Alberta's $726 million of plastics exports in primary forms exceeded British Columbia's $47 million by a wide margin, but British Columbia's $168 million exports of plastics in manufactured form exceeded Alberta's $117 million by a comfortable margin.

The United States is by far the most important market for plastic products shipped from any province. It was the destination for about 90 per cent of British Columbia exports of plastic manufacture during the 1990s.

British Columbia has been more successful than any other province at finding Asian markets for plastic manufactured products. Nevertheless, exports of these products shipped to Asia have never amounted to more than a small fraction of the provincial total, so that their potential loss, should economic difficulties in that region continue, would be unlikely to seriously harm the industry in British Columbia. British Columbia exports of plastic manufactured products to all of Asia amounted to only $3 million dollars in 1997, compared to $153 million shipped to the United States.



Plastic manufactured goods exported from British Columbia are concentrated in a relatively few product categories. Packaging alone accounted for one third (34 per cent). Plates, sheet, film, etc. made up another 18 per cent. Builders ware including windows, tanks, and other building products accounted for another 13 per cent; and tubes, pipes, hoses, connectors, etc. were another 10 per cent. A large miscellaneous category (20 per cent) included items ranging from plastic clothing accessories to house siding material.

Even with the rapid growth in exports of plastic manufactured goods, the indications are that the province is still a net international importer of these products.

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No statistics are available to directly estimate the value of imports consumed in British Columbia of plastic goods or any other particular type of product. However, there are import figures that can provide some comparative indicators. For example, the value of plastic manufactured goods entering Canada through Customs Ports located in British Columbia amounted to $396 million in 1997. This suggests that there is a considerable volume of import traffic that the British Columbia industry might hope to at least partially replace with domestic product. Another import statistic suggesting this is the British Columbia share of total Canadian imports of plastic manufactured products, apportioned on a per capita basis by province. This is estimated at $563 million for 1997.

For Canada as a whole, imports can be compared directly to exports. Total Canadian imports of manufactured plastic products amounted to $4,331 million in 1997. Canadian exports of these products came to $3,747 million, leaving a national trade deficit of $584 million.

The United States was the source of 83 per cent of Canadian imports of plastic manufactured products in 1997, shipping $3,595 million of the $4,331 million imported into Canada from all countries. It was the destination for 92 per cent of total Canadian exports of these goods, $3,438 million of $3,747 million.

These figures produce a Canadian 1997 trading deficit with the United States of $157 million for plastic manufactured products. While not trivial, this figure is still a long way down from the $505 million of 1990. If the Canadian dollar continues to trade at record low levels against the United States dollar, it would not be impossible for Canada to become a net exporter of plastic manufactured products to the United States by the end of the decade.

So far in this decade, British Columbia manufacturers of plastic products have kept pace with manufacturers in other provinces as they have expanded their share of the vast United States import market. The total Canadian share of U.S. imports of plastic manufactured products has climbed steadily through the 1990s, from 19 per cent in 1990, to 27 per cent in 1997.

1997 B.C. Exports of Plastic Manufactured Products

	($ millions)	distribution
packaging	56,713,661	33.7%
plates, sheet, film, etc.	30,352,332	18.1%
builder's ware	22,040,464	13.1%
tubes, pipes, hoses, etc.	15,955,682	9.5%
baths, shower stalls, etc.	6,850,767	4.1%
household articles	2,273,399	1.4%
other	33,878,901	20.2%
total	168,065,206	100.0%

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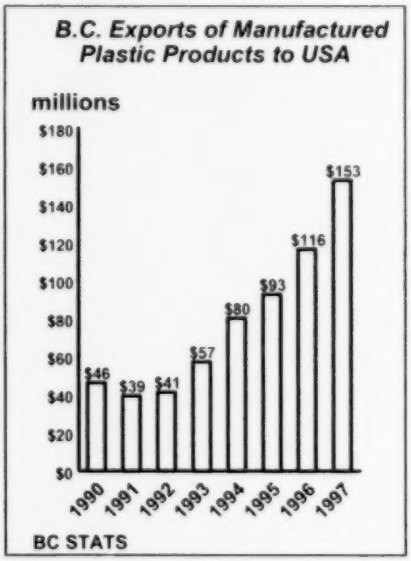
British Columbia's share grew from 0.8 per cent of the $US 10,093 million market in 1990, to 1.1 per cent of the much larger $US 20,470 million market in 1997. This was achieved through a 233 per cent increase in exports to the United States from $46 million (Canadian dollars) in 1990, to $153 million in 1997.

Ontario remains by far the biggest Canadian exporter of plastic manufactured products to the United States. However, it has not experienced as rapid growth in exports over the 1990s as other provinces have. Ontario shipments of plastic manufactured goods to the United States climbed 186 per cent from 1990 to 1997, from $760 million to $2,170 million.



Infoline

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also on the Internet at http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/98	% change on one year ago
BC	3,958.7	1.4
Canada	30,488.9	1.0
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1997	one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	109,347	3.3
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	98,201	2.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	25,039	0.2
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,515	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jun	2,743	-5.2
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jun	2,074	-9.1
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jun	2,775	2.1
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Jul '98	one year ago
BC	110.4	0.5
Canada	108.8	1.0
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Jul '98	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,040	0.6
Employed - BC	1,854	0.1
Unemployed - BC	187	5.7
		Jul '97
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	9.1	8.7
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.4	9.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Aug 26/98	Aug 27/97
Prime Business Rate	6.50	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.75	5.65
- 5 year	7.15	7.00
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Aug 26/98	Aug 27/97
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.5622	1.3918
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.6401	0.7185
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jun '98	one year ago
BC	622.54	0.2
Canada	605.61	0.8

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

Oops! We found some errors in the High Tech paper announced here on July 24th. Anyone who downloaded a copy from our Internet site prior to August 27th should discard that copy and download the corrected version.

The High Technology sector is one of the fastest growing parts of the provincial economy. BC STATS and the Information, Science, and Technology Agency (ISTA) are tracking high technology gross domestic product (GDP), revenue, employment, wages and salaries, exports and imports, and the number of firms in each region on a long term basis. The information is set out in an annual release containing both detailed tables and analysis of significant relationships and trends. The latest of these releases, covering the years 1988-1996 is now on the BC STATS web site.

You can download a free copy at:

http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/hi_tech.htm

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Released this week by BC STATS

- Business Indicators, August 1998
- Current Statistics, August 1998
- Exports, June 1998

Next week

- Tourism Room Revenue, May 1998

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